



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

seem, everybody knows whom we mean by it."

There are not a few library bulletins which contain advertisements. Personally, I believe it better to wait until a dignified sheet can be afforded than to compromise in this way. Monthly bulletins are to be preferred to those appearing quarterly, so much of the value of these publications consisting in their timeliness.

After we have made every effort to get rid of the technical features which appeal chiefly to librarians and after we have placed statistical information and lists of branches in an inconspicuous part of the bulletin, we shall still fail of the greatest effect if we do not issue a typographically attractive publication. I shall not attempt to say what styles or sizes of type should be used, if only a small type be avoided, for there are many successful combinations. Your local printer should be able to advise; if not, follow the model of some bulletin which presents a page pleasing in appearance and easy to read.

Another thought has come to me since I began gathering together my ideas on this subject. Might it not be well, considering that very few of our libraries can afford to print bulletins sufficient for all subscribers, to make some effort to see that those we do print get into the hands of people who really want them. At present they lie on our desks and are taken away by those who happen first to come within our doors. Might not a card reading "Library bulletin may be obtained free upon request" deter the indifferent from carrying them home to their waste baskets? Might not a conspicuously placed, simply gotten up poster advertising the contents of the bulletin give it a special value, and stir up some of the indifferent? These are only suggestions. The problem of each library bulletin is an individual one. We have been too content to copy from one another; we have gotten into a rut and we need to realize that here is one of the rare fields where it is safe to experiment.

## THE FINE ART OF PRINTING

BY T. M. CLELAND, *New York*

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: Not being a librarian myself, I am greatly imbued with a respect and fear of the exactness of expression you may require of me. Thus, after selecting the title "The fine art of printing" for the subject of my paper, I have been greatly disturbed as to whether it would be considered a correct one or not. My only thought in selecting it, was to distinguish between the "liberal art" of printing—its scientific and industrial development, of which I have nothing to say, and its aesthetic aspect, to which all I have to say will be confined. I have since become painfully aware that the title "The fine art of printing" is one capable of many meanings other than the one I had in mind. It might be thought, for example, that it meant what is commonly known as

"art printing," a term used by printers to distinguish a class of work, the evident aim of which is to be as ornamental and, at the same time, as useless as possible. So let us understand at the outset that we are speaking of the "Fine art" of a kind of printing which can be read, printing which performs its given function, however common and useful that may be.

Viollet-le-Duc, the celebrated writer on Architecture, furnishes me with an excellent text which I shall translate as literally as possible. He says—"A civilization cannot pretend to possess an art unless that art shall penetrate everywhere—unless it makes its presence felt in the commonest of works." Now surely, printing is, in the best sense, one of the commonest of works, and yet, I venture to say that

there are many of us who have done, or have had done for us, a good deal of printing, without realizing that it was or might be, a fine art. We would hesitate to attempt a portrait, or a landscape painting or a decorative design, without having a special aptitude or talent or training; but who, for the lack of those qualifications, ever hesitated to say how a piece of printing should be done? And yet, printing is one of the fine arts of design—as fine and as difficult in its way as any other, and when you or the printer or whoever it may be, says that a piece of printing shall be done thus and so, you are *designing* it—you are practising a fine art. Many of us are already aware of this, no doubt, and have made worthy efforts to improve the quality and appearance of our printing, but for those who have not done so (whom I suspect of being in the majority) a way must be found to bring them to a proper sense of their delinquency. In order that the punishment may not be greater than the crime, however, I will try my best to be brief in my endeavors to point out some of the elements of this art, in the hope that you will consider it worthy of your interest and study.

Presumably, we are all more or less familiar with the history of the printing press, and have at some time or other interested ourselves in the complex and learned disputes over the origin of the art. But our interest at present is not historical and our time is too fleeting and the art itself too long to permit of more than a cursory notice of some of the salient points in its evolution. I need hardly point out that we must confine ourselves to simple typographic printing such as we commonly use, leaving aside the many developments and allied processes which might come within the scope of our title.

Now the primary component of common printing is, of course, the type character, and it is proper that we should begin by considering some of the steps in the development of type design, as well as the principle on which it was conceived.

The fact of greatest importance regard-

ing the origin of printing types is so obvious, that it shares the fate of a great many other simple matters of common knowledge, in being frequently overlooked. Most printers never did know, and most other people are wont to forget, that the invention of printing had originally no other motive than the mechanical imitation of the handwriting which had previously been the sole means of making a book. We should remember, however, that the handwriting used in books at the time printing was invented, did not resemble that with which we perplex each other at the present day. I should perhaps not say “we” because *you* have, I believe, in your profession an admirable kind of writing of your own which reverts, in a way, to the readability and regularity of the early manuscripts. We are all more or less familiar with the beautiful handwritings of the 15th and 16th centuries and we know to what an extent books thus written and illuminated by the early scribes were treasured by the very few persons who were able to possess them. (It is interesting and profitable, in this connection, to imagine how greatly the invention of printing must have been deplored by many of the connoisseurs and collectors of that time, to whom its rank commercialism doubtless appeared to sound the knell of the art of the book.)

The elementary forms of the written characters in use at the time when moveable types were invented, proceeded, as may readily be observed, from the form of the pen with which they were made. For fine writing a goose or crow quill was used and for the coarser kinds, a split reed, but in all cases they were cut in the same manner. This resembled somewhat our stub pen except that the broad point was sharpened in the form of a carpenter’s chisel and cut off at a slight angle to conform with the position of the hand in writing. The ink flowed in a broad band the full width of the point when the pen was drawn up or down and when it was drawn in a lateral direction along its sharp edge only, a thin line resulted. In forming the

curved strokes of the letters the line was graduated as the direction of the stroke changed, forming a line of peculiar grace, which is inimitable by any other method, and which is one of the features of greatest beauty in the round, or so-called Roman characters, which, outside of Germany, have long been the accepted medium of western civilizations.

It is proper, before going further, to say that we must confine ourselves to the consideration of the evolution of the Roman type face only: not because we fail to recognize the great beauty and interest of the many variations which are classed as "Gothic," but because these characters are no longer quite readable to our eyes, and have irrevocably passed from general use. They have no place, except a decorative one, in the practice of modern printing.

The first printing types were, of course, made in this Gothic form, common to the writing of Northern Europe, and familiar to the German inventors, and it was not until after the introduction of the new art into Italy that any Roman characters were made for printing. There, the inevitable demand for an appropriate character in which to print the Latin classics led to the cutting of types modeled upon the Roman manuscript forms. It is in these first Roman types produced in Italy that we find the models which were to serve for all time. These types, I must reiterate, were directly derived from the round formal handwriting of the Latin manuscripts—were, in fact, as close imitations as the mechanical difficulties of type cutting and casting would permit; and being nearest to the source, they are the classics of type design. Of all of these first Roman types made in Italy, that which was cut and used by Nicholas Jenson, a Frenchman, has long held the place of honour and may fairly be considered the example "par excellence" of the period.

We should not pass this Italian period without some notice of another form of letter which has become nearly indispensable in modern printing. I refer to what are known today as "Italics." These are

said to have been invented by the great Venetian printer and publisher Aldus Manutius early in the 16th century and were done in imitation of the freer "cursive" handwriting commonly employed in regular correspondence. Aldus used these types with charming effect in his little pocket editions of the classics which were the forerunners of our popular priced editions of today. The Italic types came into very general use in the 16th century—were, in fact, somewhat abused for a time, until the formal Roman happily regained its supremacy as the standard for text printing. The Italics came to serve only for the printing of prefaces or dedications, or, as we use them now, for special emphasis of words or phrases.

We must return now to the development of the formal Roman character, and note the next step in its evolution which takes place in France in the 16th century. Here we find, as in the other arts, that the creative genius of Italy has been seized upon by the French and passed through a process of refinement—imbued with a peculiar grace and elegance. The solid pen lines and vigorous amplitude of the earlier forms take on an attenuation, a sharpness and delicacy, which, though it has forfeited something of the architectural stability of the earlier model, is more graceful. The important point to be noted, however, with regard to these French types, is that we find in them the design of printing types standing for the first time upon its own feet as an independent art—independent, I mean, of the slavish imitation of handwriting. The art of type design had branched out from the parent stem, so to speak, and was growing in its own way. It should not be supposed, however, that it had lost the initial principle of handwriting. It had only added to the character in which it was conceived, a character of its own. The conclusion I would draw from this is, roughly, that these French Roman types of the 16th century might be considered as the first real printing types—the first which accorded fully with the mechanical requirements of the art as we

know it today; and hence are the finest models which we have for *practical* consideration. The earlier Italian models are possibly more beautiful in themselves, considered from a rigidly high plane of taste; but I am not sure that the printing done with them does not partake more of the character of manuscript than of printing as we are required to practice it today. These types are, if I dare say so, a little too classical, a little too remote—like the Greek temples at Paestum, they are inspiring, but it is hard to find any direct application for them.

As the 17th century was more notable for exuberance in the fine arts than for taste, so *its* contribution to the development of type design, does not command our respect or gratitude. The general characteristics of the product of this period were clumsiness and poor workmanship. There was an inclination to fatten the letters somewhat and to increase the contrast between the light and the heavy strokes. The serifs of the capital letters became more pronounced and they frequently exhibited a tendency to curl and disport themselves at unseemly angles.

There is but little change to be noted during the greater part of the 18th century. The features of the preceding one were generally retained, though there are notable instances of an endeavor to improve the workmanship in some quarters. Fournier, the French founder, and William Caslon in England, were both very creditable workmen; but Caslon's design (which is in very general use today, for want of a better) was sadly far astray from the fine models of the 16th century, which we are told he aimed to rival. It is, comparatively speaking, however, a good sound type face, and though its wide popularity at the present time is largely due to the circumstances of its being available, we may be thankful to have anything as good.

The end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th was productive of a very radical development in the design of Roman types—something which was almost an innovation. We cannot enter into

the question of the causes and influences which brought about this change, though they are clearly defined; but must content ourselves with a brief notice of the type-cutter and printer, Bodoni of Parma, as undoubtedly the leading figure in the creation of what are known today as "modern face" types—the types most commonly employed in the great body of current printed matter. The salient features of Bodoni's innovation are an excessive contrast between the light and heavy strokes of the letters—"light and shade" he called it—the thin strokes being almost hair lines and the thick ones broad and black. The serifs of the letters, which had hitherto flowed in to the stems with a gentle curve, such as would naturally result from a pen stroke, are reduced to simple straight lines, and where they were formerly slanting on the lower-case letters, they become practically horizontal. The round letters are no longer quite circular, but elliptical, and the general effect of all the letters is more condensed. Here we have the mechanical printing type finally developed and remote from the source of handwriting; but still not wholly independent of that principle, or lacking in a beauty and dignity of its own. Bodoni's designs especially, though artificial, and to a great degree subservient to a desire for neatness and accuracy, were never wholly mechanical.

They opened the way, however, for a complete and speedy disintegration of the whole art of type design. From a tendency to "full figure" the type face progressed through all the stages of stoutness, obesity, and elephantitis, back through emaciation and tuberculosis, ending with the contortions of epilepsy! To open a type founder's specimen book today is a shock to the nerves of anyone not inured to the sight of delirium and deformity. If, however, these typographical nightmares are still on sale and in use, it is encouraging to know that they are not to any extent *created* at the present time; but that, on the contrary, noteworthy efforts are being made both by private individuals and commercial type founders to revert to better

standards. These efforts on the part of the regular type foundry have suffered from a confusion of the mechanical precision required for the *body* of the type, with the design of its face. Inestimable improvements have been made in the accuracy and uniformity of the casting and the standardization of sizes. But, unfortunately, the same use of the compass and the micrometer has been brought to bear on the design of the type face itself—the curves are scientifically plotted like the curves of a railway track and the sense of life and movement, the human element of all fine design—the thing which was in handwriting, has been sacrificed to the sterile perfection of a geometrical diagram.

The Fine Art of Printing does not end, however, as many printers appear to believe, with the design or selection of a type face and we must go on to the consideration of the arrangement or composition of types. The infinite variety of forms in which type may be required to be set, makes it impossible to do more than touch upon a very few of the commoner ones which may occur in everyday practice. The most important form of composition is, of course, that of text matter, and I want only to make one or two suggestions regarding this, and to point out certain principles which may govern its design—for even *this* is design. Here, the primary object will properly be readability; and it should be clearly understood that the same means which accomplish this, will, if applied with taste, make for beauty of design. Sometime, not very far in the past someone arbitrarily decided that a certain size of space should be used between words as a standard for text composition, and from that unhappy day to this, all type has been furnished with this size of spaces and all printers have regarded it as a sacred law, not even daring to think what might happen if it should be departed from. I am not alone in the opinion that were the spacing standard of text considerably *reduced*, it would be greatly improved both in readability and appearance, and one may find evidence to support this view in almost any

fine old book in which the spacing is close and the continuity of the lines is well preserved. Most of our text composition today has more the appearance of having been splattered on the page or shot from a blunderbuss than composed in well ordered lines. The individual words are generally so successfully isolated in space, that they are as easily connected with the words above and below them as they are with the words preceding and following. This naturally puts upon the eye the difficult task of holding the line intact. It would certainly be a fatiguing exercise mentally and physically to cross and recross a stream on stepping stones for hours at a time: and yet our eyes are compelled to hop, skip and jump over the average loose type page with much the same insecure motion. By experiment I believe it will be found that a very slight space indeed is sufficient to distinguish one word from another. Lines may be spaced apart by leading and, in many cases, should be; but there can be no exact rule for this—it depends largely upon the character of the type face itself, and one had better be guided by the aim of preserving the continuity of the line in all cases, resorting to leading when it is required to this end.

The earliest printed books, it will be recalled, had no title pages, but the printer gave as much or as little information as he cared to, regarding the author, the date, etc., in a colophon at the back of the book. Later, it became the custom to print the title in a simple text paragraph in the same type as that used in the body of the book. It was the spirit of advertising which developed the title-page as we know it today—the desire to command attention, the need for emphasis and display: and in the title-page we find our model for the design of commercial, or what is known by printers as “display” typography. Here, different sizes of type and even different faces set forth the varying significance of the matter to be expressed; and the material for fine design becomes more liberal and pliant. There are lines of varying lengths and sizes of varying weight and

color-value to be composed into an harmonious whole. A not uncommon pitfall, met with in this class of work, is the endeavor to form solid blocks of capitals of a number of lines of equal length. I say this is a pitfall, because it is rarely successful and generally results in the evidence of effort misspent. It is safer to employ a broken composition of lines of varying length—it is easier and invariably pleasing in effect if well designed. I should not forget to mention the deplorable practice too frequently encountered, of spacing between letters ("letterspacing" it is technically called) of the lower case. The lower case is by its very nature a continuous design intended primarily for text, and it is quite as absurd to separate the individual letters as it would be to do so in our everyday handwriting. Capitals, on the other hand, may generally be letter-spaced to advantage, and thus be made less confusing and more readable. There is no reason why they should be set, when used together, with no more space than happens to be provided by the typefounder for their proper connection with the lower case. One might continue without end to enumerate the many little practices of bad design in typography which seem to have their root in nothing but perverseness; but I will mention only one more, which, though it may seem a small matter, is peculiarly foolish and persistent among people who should know better. One of the commonest means of adorning a page of solid text is to begin it with an ornamental initial. This was, as we know, an agreeable feature of the books of the early printers, who borrowed it from the written and illuminated manuscripts; and it has continued in use as long as books have been made. It naturally fits snugly into the type page, according with the depth of a certain number of lines and having about as much space around it as appears between the lines themselves. Why then, will so many printers today take special pains to leave a large white space at the side and below it, giving it the effect of clinging desperately by one eye brow to the first letter of the

page, with its legs dangling in mid air?

There is perhaps no more vital element in the design of a fine book or page of printed matter than the margins, and certainly none about which so much misunderstanding exists or so much nonsense has been talked and written. We have been told that "wide" margins make beautiful books, and that what are called "large paper copies" are by virtue of the largeness of their paper, worth much larger sums than ordinary books. Might we not gather from this that extra large clothes are better than clothes that fit? It is perfectly true that within reasonable limits, ample margins will add to the luxuriousness and beauty of a book, but it is not primarily their amplitude, but their just and perfect proportion which is beautiful, as in every other work of design. In other words, a type page poorly arranged, as most "large paper" editions are, on the widest margins on earth will never be as good as one on the meanest margins which are correctly proportioned in their relation one to another. A glance at any fine example of a correctly imposed page will show that the narrowest margin is at the back, the next in width being the top, the fore-edge or side margin being still wider, and the bottom of the page the widest of all. This tends to make the two pages of the book when open form a single block of two columns divided by the necessary space for the hinge of the binding. One might question and analyze this convention, as one might question or seek to analyze the entasis of a classical column or the proportion of one of the architectural orders; but it is scarcely worth while. There is a very obvious practical reason for this arrangement of margins, in the simple fact that the book is held, naturally, by the sides or the bottom. It is not practicable to have wide margins on all books, for reasons of cost; but correct proportion is one of the few things in this world which has never advanced in price; and if it is inexcusable for this reason to find it lacking in the margins of the cheapest and commonest books, the culpability and sinfulness of

some of our so-called "editions de luxe" reaches a depth which I hesitate to contemplate further.

There are many other matters, such as the ornamentation of typography and the relation of illustrations to type which have their part in the fine art of printing; but which are less essential and for lack of time must be passed over. We can hardly afford, however, to neglect entirely the questions of press work and papers, which, though they are largely technical, have certainly a vital part in the design of good printing. The finest monuments of the art, as we know, were printed on the old hand press, inked by hand with leather covered pads or balls and the impression drawn by a hand lever operating a screw or toggle. The paper was generally dampened to moderate its resistance to the impression of the type or cuts, and the impression of the form in the paper is quite evident in the finished result. Now this visible impression is one of the essential beauties of really fine printing on hand-made papers or papers of a like character. But we are presented today with further problems such as the printing of half-tone illustrations in conjunction with type; and for this a very smooth or a surface-coated paper is required, and instead of the visible impression we can employ only so much as is sufficient to render a perfect imprint of the form on the surface of the paper. There is today an almost infinite variety of papers for a vastly greater number of requirements than were known to the printers of hardly a century ago. Thus we are presented with the problem of selecting suitable type for these various papers and the complexity of this question makes it scarcely possible to do more than recommend the exercise of taste and common sense. For example, the old style types were designed with the object of printing on hand made papers with considerable impression from which they gained a certain weight and force. Printed on highly finished or coated papers they lose color to a great extent and present a distressingly diluted aspect. The modern-face types, such

as Bodoni's or the French types of the same period, were made at a time when the first smooth papers came into use and they generally maintain a firmer appearance on the papers commonly employed at present for half-tone printing.

Much sentiment attaches today to the old fashioned hand press and for persons whose love of sentiment transcends their appreciation of art, books printed on it have a special value. Good work has been done, we know, on hand presses; and with a great deal of time and pains it may be done today, but a modern cylinder press is in all respects, a finer machine, and is capable of doing better work of any description, and doing it incomparably faster and in larger quantities.

If I have spoken at too great length upon these technical matters, I trust you will pardon me and believe that it was only through an earnest desire that whatever I have to say shall have a *practical* end. We all recognize that a standard of taste exists in this as in other things, but I know only too well how great are the difficulties which meet our every attempt to follow that standard in our daily work, and how little help we receive. The literature on the art of printing is divided between dry historical and bibliographical discussion on the one hand and the maudlin sentimentality of the self styled "book-lover" on the other. So I have tried to show that the study of good printing is the study of design—something within the reach of everyone, something which may be applied to any and every piece of printing with which we have to do. I want, in short, to impress the fact that the fine art of printing is organic—that it is not dependent upon materials and conditions and expense—that it consists in the proper relation of its own inherent elements—type, ink, and paper, and not in extraneous ornament. A great many people scramble through the pages of a fine book until they come to an ornamental heading or an illustration, and to do this is to ignore completely the real art of printing.

If I have departed from a fixed principle



of conduct, that it is better to try to do good work than to talk about it, it is only because this occasion seemed too important to let pass, and because I believe there is no better field for the cultivation of a finer taste in this art than the public libraries throughout the country. Either by the establishment of presses of your own or the exercise of taste and design in the printing which you have done for you, there are splendid opportunities. As you uphold and strive constantly for a higher standard in the literature which it is your high calling to distribute amongst the people, so you will be quick, I believe, to recognize the educational value of a higher

standard for the physical form in which that literature is presented.

But it is not sufficient that you encourage or *collect* fine printing—you have catalogs and pamphlets and bulletins and many other things the typography of which may be improved upon. Too much lies idle in collections, and I firmly believe that it is the lack of employment and application which is developing signs of insanity in our modern art. It is demoralized, just as people may be, through idleness and lack of purpose. Nothing will save it, but to go out on the street and work for its living—it must “penetrate,” to go back to our text, “*everywhere*.” It must “make its presence felt in the commonest of works.”

## THE CHANGING LITERARY TASTE AND THE GROWING APPEAL OF POETRY

BY MAY MASSEE, *Editor A. L. A. Booklist, Chicago*

The changing literary taste and the growing appeal of poetry. Is it true? Does the poet today speak to the average man of today as never before and does the average man of today listen as never before? “To have great poets there must be great audiences too.” What does it mean that there are in this country two magazines devoted entirely to poetry, that our literary reviews are devoting pages where ten years ago they devoted lines to poetry, that our popular magazines are featuring poetry and using their highest paid artists to awake the attention of such of their readers as may not turn instinctively to the page of verse? Why is it that the “Anthology of magazine verse” for 1913 included forty-seven poems and that of 1914 included seventy-seven? Indeed what is that very collection itself but another evidence that poetry of *today* really finds readers. Instances to the truth of this might be multiplied indefinitely but I will only name one more, conclusive in this day. Last winter in New York a member of a publishing firm, one of the oldest and most notably commercial in its policy, said

to me: “We are going to add some poetry to our list. We feel that it really pays and that we must have it to compete with other houses.”

The rash layman who attempts to formulate any theories of literary tastes and tendencies and further attempts to set limits or show trend in poetry today lends himself liable to the lifted eyebrow and the murmured word of “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.” And it is with a perfect realization of this truth and with a profound and growing humility that the editor of this paper has realized the futility of such an attempt and has merely chosen quotations from the words of the poets themselves to show that it is as true today, perhaps more true, than in the time of the ancient Greeks that children may have schoolmasters for their leaders but men have poets. “For what is it to be a poet? It is to see at a glance the glory of the world, to see beauty in all its forms and manifestations, to feel ugliness like a pain, to resent the wrongs of others as bitterly as one’s own, to know mankind as others know single men, to know Nature